



DC

318

L76

Author

Title

Imprint



1 7 25

THE

PARIS COMMUNE.

✓
BY W. J. LINTON.

2 12 2
2 12 2

In answer to the Calumnies of the New York Tribune.



5 BOSTON:
REPRINTED FROM THE RADICAL FOR SEPTEMBER.
1871.

"The Tribune aims to be pre-eminently a Newspaper, . . . a journal which has no superior in the accuracy, variety, and freshness of its contents."

TRIBUNE ADVERTISEMENT.

"Newspapers are not licensed defamers."

TRIBUNE EDITOR.

You have loaded your columns with infamous rumors and malignant insinuations; you have vented charges for which even your own garbled and partial reports gave not so much as a pretense of justification.

W. J. L. — LETTER TO MR. WHITELAW REID.

THE PARIS COMMUNE.

THE PARIS COMMUNE: its history and meaning.

To begin, I take the story of "The New-York Tribune:" abridging, but nowhere altering, "The Tribune's" reports. In the accompanying notes I make such additions and corrections as I find fairly authenticated in the various Paris journals of the same dates.

PARIS, March 9, 1871. The Committee of the Bordeaux Assembly reports in favor of removing to Fontainebleau. Thiers persists in preferring Versailles.

MARCH 10. A private dispatch from Paris states that the National Guards are strongly intrenched in Montmartre, with thirty-three guns, awaiting the signal of their leaders to proclaim open revolution in favor of the Commune; also threatening to dissolve the Assembly if it meets at Versailles. The Government is conciliatory.

MARCH 14. The insurgents have given in.

MARCH 16. They are scattering on account of the weather.

MARCH 17. The situation is unchanged. *No acts of violence have been committed.* After a council of war, Thiers issues a proclamation, and at midnight sends troops and gendarmes to surprise the insurgents, to take the thirty cannon, and to occupy

Montmartre. A number of cannon are removed and four hundred prisoners taken. Next morning —

SATURDAY, March 18. The National Guards of Belleville and Montmartre, with many unarmed soldiers of the line, release the prisoners. Gen. Vinoy's cordon of troops and mitrailleuses, commanding the approaches to Montmartre, is invaded by angry groups of citizens, who remonstrate with the soldiers, and a general fraternization takes place. The soldiers on the summit also fraternize with the Nationals, who are still guarding some of the cannon. As fresh troops arrive the people order them to "reverse arms," and are obeyed. At ten, A.M., the Nationals again hold the ground. In the Place Pigalle, at the end of a street leading to the heights, some artillerymen and chasseurs are surrounded by a mob taunting them with cries of, "Go and fight the Prussians!" — A lieutenant, endeavoring to disengage himself, draws his sabre, and is dragged from his horse and killed. In the *melée* one artilleryman and two Nationals are wounded. The soldiers mingle with the crowd, distributing among them their cartridges and chassepots. Only the gendarmes remain faithful to the Government. They are too few to be effective, and are withdrawn. At eleven, A.M., not a soldier nor a gendarme is visible. At Lavalette also the troops fraternize, whole regiments surrendering their arms and refusing to act against the insurgents. The purposes of the insurgents are still indefinite. Their main object just now is resistance to the Government. The crowds at Belleville and Montmartre are unanimous in their clamors against the Bordeaux Assembly. They demand its immediate dissolution, and the election of a new body which shall sit in Paris.

Further on the same report says that Gen. Faron was for several hours surrounded by the mob; but his troops proved faithful, took three barricades with the bayonet, and cut their way out. Gen. Paturel was wounded. Gen. Vinoy was hissed and pelted; also was shot. Gens. Lecomte and Thomas, abandoned by their men, were taken prisoners. Lecomte was killed, and Thomas taken before a drum-head court-martial and shot. Gen. "Paladines" was taken prisoner to the rebel headquarters. Many gendarmes were killed. The horse of a staff-officer was

killed, cut up, and eaten. The troops succeeded in capturing forty cannon, and the people retook five without fighting. The remainder were removed to a place of safety. Gen. Vinoy's staff, all troops of the line, and the entire force of gendarmes, returned to the left bank of the Seine, *leaving the National Guards to restore order on the right.*

After the morning's failure, Thiers issues another proclamation, repudiating any intention of a *coup d'état*, warning *the Communists who seek to pillage Paris* that they will ruin France, and appealing to the National Guards to put an end to the anarchy into which they have plunged the Capital.*

(The above is in the very words — only abridged — of "The Tribune's" correspondent, and contains the whole story of March 18 as given in "The Tribune" of Monday, March 20.)

The latest news (from London) is that the Nationals of Montmartre have seized the headquarters of the National Guards of Paris.†

MARCH 21. The situation unchanged. Fresh barricades, but general quietude. Omnibuses not running, and traffic ceased. The Nationals occupy forts Issy, Vanvres, and Bicetre. The Police Commissioners are arrested. The Central Committee, in its official journal of the 20th, publishes the following: "*A manifesto, originating in the suffrages of two hundred and fifteen battalions of the National Guard*, repudiates disturbance. The Government calumniates Paris and arms the Provinces. It imposes upon us a commander, attempts night disarmings, removes the capital. . . . The Nationals have participated in no crime." The journal also orders elections on the 22d, and announces that the Committee will abdicate on the election of

* He himself cuts off telegraphic communication between Paris and the Provinces, and boasts in his proclamation of Vinoy's forty thousand men. He writes to the Prefects of Departments that the generals are returning from Germany, and that Canrobert has offered his sword, — Canrobert, who, on the 2d of December, grape-shotted women and children in Montmartre. For "the anarchy" take this, from *La Commune*, Paris, March 21: "Yesterday (Monday) the Exchange opened as usual, in spite of orders sent expressly from Versailles."

† Implies that the revolt is only of a section of Paris, — the working-men's districts of Belleville and Montmartre.

a new one. It declares its respect for the preliminaries of peace, and invites adhesions from the Departments. It repudiates all participation in the execution of Gens. Lecomte and Thomas.*

The Nationals "completely possess the whole city." Gen. Clancy is maltreated by the mob; sent to the hospital; confined in prison; released by the Committee. Many persons are shot without trial. "The Nationals *will* shoot M. Thiers and Gens. Vinoy and D'Aurelles* if they should be captured." Strong reaction among the respectable inhabitants. The Central Committee, alarmed thereat, seeks the mediation of "the Mayor of the city" for the appointment of Admiral Saisset to the command of the National Guard.† The insurgent journals declare a willingness to treat with the Versailles Government on the following conditions: "*The election of a COMMUNAL COUNCIL ‡ by the people of Paris; reorganization of the National Guard, with power to elect and remove their own officers; and suppression of the Prefecture of Police.*"§ The "army journals" declare Thiers the author of the trouble. The editors of the Paris journals oppose the ordered elections, and call upon the National Guard to come forward and put an end to the deplorable state of affairs.|| The Versailles Government addresses a circular to the Prefects of Departments, informing them that the revolution, dishonored by its criminal acts, is unanimously disavowed; that the Assembly also disavows it.¶ The Mayors of Paris —

* L'Opinion National says that Lecomte was shot by his own soldiers, whom he had threatened to shoot for fraternizing with the National Guards. A Versailles paper mentions a corporal of the Eighty-eighth Regiment.

† There is no "Mayor of the city." Saisset was so unpopular that not a battalion would follow him. It was he who, in the Assembly, spoke for calling on the Provinces to march against Paris, "and so have done with it."

‡ So in The Tribune, for all the editor's after-ignorance of anything except "Communism."

§ The Imperial Prefecture.

|| "Two hundred and fifteen" battalions — out of two hundred and sixty-five — having already come forward *for* the Commune.

¶ Saying nothing of the protests of the Representatives of Paris. Altogether a most disingenuous and lying circular.

the circular also says — protest and refuse to carry out the illegal orders for the *Communal* elections; and the Nationals only demand the nomination of Saisset. The Government promises the speedy intervention of the army.

MARCH 22. A large number of unarmed persons attempt to pass the lines guarded by the Nationals. Refused passage, and, "retreating too slowly," three ranks of the Nationals filed out and fired, killing or wounding thirty persons. "The Nationals have since been re-enforced, and are orderly."* The Nationals, under the order of "the Central Republican Committee," occupy Fort Vincennes unopposed, the garrison fraternizing. Gen. Cluseret has installed himself at the Ministry of War.† The Bourse is deserted. Reported that Gen. Raphael has been assassinated.

MARCH 24. Elections postponed. The commander of the insurgent Nationals justifies "the massacre" on the 22d, on the ground that the opposite party fired first. Rumored that Gen. Ducrot has been shot by his own soldiers. Admiral Saisset appointed commander of the orderly Nationals. The insurgent leaders losing control of their troops.

MARCH 26. The Central Committee, the Paris Deputies to the Assembly, and the Mayors and the Assistant Mayors of Arrondissements yesterday joined in a proclamation ordering elections for to-day, *urging all classes to vote*, and to give the vote a serious character, such as alone can insure the peace of the city.‡ The voting has passed off without disorder, and the

* In the first instance, some one hundred and fifty men, with drum and cries of, "Down with the Commune!" parade the streets. These go unnoticed. Later, shots are fired; first by "the unarmed" demonstrators. Three Nationals were killed, and a dozen of "the party of order," who provoked and began the affray.

† The only committee as yet is "the Central Committee" of the National Guard, which has no "Ministry of War." Cluseret arrived in Paris on the 25th of March, and was appointed by the Communal Council on the 4th of April.

‡ The elections had been put off on account of the hesitation of some of the Mayors to co-operate with the Central Committee. In the *Mot d'Ordre* Rochefort says that the Committee invited them to take their place at the Hotel de Ville even so early as the night of the 19th; but they waited word

city is tranquil.* The list of candidates endorsed by the Central Committee has been extensively distributed.† In the first from Versailles. Afterward, with few exceptions, they joined in the proclamation (that referred to by The Tribune) here following :—

FRENCH REPUBLIC.

LIBERTY—EQUALITY—FRATERNITY.

The Central Committee of the National Guard, to which have rallied the Deputies of Paris, the Mayors and Adjoints, convinced that the sole means to avoid civil war, the effusion of blood in Paris, and at the same time to consolidate [affermir] the Republic, is to proceed to immediate elections, convokes for to-morrow (Sunday) all the citizens in their electoral colleges.

The inhabitants of Paris will comprehend that under present circumstances patriotism obliges them all to come to vote, to the end that the elections may have that serious character which alone can assure peace to the city.

The bureaux will be open at eight in the morning and closed at midnight.

VIVE LA REPUBLIQUE!

Undersigned are the names of the Mayors and Assistant Mayors of seventeen arrondissements ; the Representatives of the Seine present in Paris, — *Lockroy, Floquet, Tolain, Clemenceau, Schoelcher, Greppo*; and the Central Committee, — *Avoine, Arnaud, Arnold, Assi, Andignoux, Bouit, Bergeret, Babick, Barond, Billioray, Blanchet, Castioni, Chouteau, Dupont, Ferrat, Fortuné, Fabre, Fleury, Fougeret, Gaudier, Gouhier, Guiral, Geresme, Grollard, Fosselin, Jourde, Lisbonne, Lavalette, Lullier, Maljournal, Moreau, Mortier, Prudhomme, Rousseau, Ranvier, Varlin, Viard.*

* A warm sun, an azure sky, promenaders everywhere, in all the streets fresh toilets of women, cafés overflowing with customers, shops dressed out with their gayest wares, people going here and there on business across the crowd, groups in which calmness replaced the animation of the past week : such, traced in broad outlines, has been the general physiognomy of the day of voting.

The elections have been conducted quietly and in good order, but the interest (empressement) of the electors has not been very great ; sometimes intermittences of a quarter of an hour between the ballots. Lively discussions between the citizens, some wanting to abstain, others considering silence as a crime. They talk, they grow warm, and that is all. — *Le Petit Journal*, Paris, March 28.

† There was no such list. The Committee distinctly refused to nominate or recommend any candidates. The election was absolutely free. Here is the list of the elected, in the order of the twenty arrondissements of Paris, as given in *Le Petit Journal* corrected by *Le Moniteur du Peuple* ; perhaps not quite correct now :—

1. *Méline, Adam, Rochart, Barré.* 2. *Brelay, Loiseau Pinson, Tirard, Chéron.* 3. *Demay, ARNAUD, Pindy, Murat, Amouroux.* 4. *ARNOULD, Amouroux, Clémence, Gérardin, Lefrançais.* 5. *Regère, JOURDE, Tridon,*

arrondissement the present Mayor and Assistant-Mayor were candidates; other arrondissements made similar nominations.* In a proclamation just issued the Central Republican Committee† resigns its functions and yields to the newly elected MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT. Barricades still are in the streets, but the cannon are turned inward. Shops open. Cabs running. The confidence of the people is reviving. Gens. Clancy and "Languoreau" are released. Menotti Garibaldi is appointed commander-in-chief.‡ Admiral Saisset called yesterday on all loyal citizens and soldiers to rally round him. To-day he disbands the loyal National Guards.§

MARCH 27. The candidates of the Central Republican Committee have been elected in all the arrondissements except three. The aggregate vote was very light. The "Journal de Paris" estimates the number of qualified voters who abstained from voting at two hundred and fifty thousand. In the second arrondissement, with twenty-two thousand eight hundred and fifty-three registered electors, twenty-one thousand one hundred and eighty votes were cast, seventeen thousand one hundred and eighty of these *against the Committee*. "The Daily News" (London), of same date, reports that "the elections passed off quietly, and resulted in an overwhelming Communist majority."

Later reports (in next day's "Tribune"): It is expected that

BLANCHET, *Ledroit*. 6. Leroy, *Goupil*, VARLIN, *Beslay*, *Robinet*. 7. *Parisel*, *Lefevre*, *Urbain*, *Brunel*, *Libeaucourt*. 8. *Raoul-Rigault*, ARNOULD, *Vaillant*, *Allix*. 9. *Ranc*, *Desmarest*, *Parent*, *Ferry*. 10. *Pyat*, FORTUNÉ, *Gambon*, *Champy*, BABICK. 11. MORTIER, *Delescluze*, *Eudes*, *Verdure*, *Pretot*, ASSI. 12. VARLIN, *Theits*, *Fruneau*, GERESME. 13. *Meillet*, *Chardon*, *Frandel*, *Duval*. 14. BILLIORAY, *Martelet*, *Descamps*. 15. *Parisel*, *Lefevre*, *Urbain*, *Brunel*. 16. *Marmottan*, *De Bouteiller*, *Victor Hugo*, *Pyat*. 17. VARLIN, *E. Clement*, *Gérardin*, *Chalain*. 18. *Blanqui*, *Dereure*, *Ferré*, *Theisz*, *Vermorel*, *J. B. Clement*, *Grousset*. 19. *Oudet*, *Puget*, *Delescluze*, *Ostyn*. 20. RANVIER, BERGERET, *Blanqui*, *Flourens*.

The names in small capitals are of members of the Central Committee.

* Nominated and elected.

† The Central Committee (of the National Guard) again.

‡ Not one of the Garibaldis—father or sons—had any part in the movement, or was in Paris during the Commune.

§ Some three hundred out of two hundred thousand.

M. Blanqui will be President of the new government.* Of five hundred thousand electors *ONLY two hundred thousand voted for the Commune*. Twenty members of the Committee elected. The conservatives successful only in the three wealthiest arrondissements. The rich generally abstained from voting, and the merchants voted the conservative ticket. The elected are mostly obscure men. The official journal says that "the first task of the newly elected *Municipality of Paris* will be the compilation of a charter that will secure the rights of the people, and prevent the representation of the large towns from being swamped by the country. . . . Matters essentially Parisian must be within the domain of the Commune."

MARCH 29. The Commune was proclaimed yesterday afternoon at the Hotel de Ville, an enormous crowd of National Guards zealously cheering the Republic.† A Sub-central Committee has replaced the old Central Committee.‡ Currently reported that a division has occurred in the Committee. Several members under arrest. Also one condemned to death as a Bonapartist. The Bank of France has again advanced five hundred thousand francs to the insurgents (one million before). The Postal Director refuses to give up his functions.§ Paris quiet. The red flag generally displayed. Menotti and Ricciotti Garibaldi have declined to fight except against a foreign enemy.

MARCH 30. The Sub-central Committee passed sentence of death upon "Wilfred" Fonvielle for being engaged in an at-

* The Communal Council had no President. Blanqui, held in prison by the Thiers Government, for the affair of Oct. 31, was never in Paris during the Commune.

† The Commune of Paris is proclaimed. The members who compose it were yesterday acclaimed, in the Place of the Hotel de Ville, by two hundred thousand armed National Guards. At the hour in which we write the Central Committee has laid down its power, &c. Speeches by Assi and Lavalette. — *La Nouvelle République*, March 30.

‡ No such committee. The Central Committee returned to its original functions as Committee of the National Guard. Only some of its members were also members of the new Communal Council.

§ But deranged everything by going to Versailles, where Paris letters were detained and opened.

tempt against the existence of the Committee.* Also an Executive Committee has been appointed by the Sub-central. It will have charge of affairs for a month. M. Blanqui is in hiding, and has not yet been present at any of the meetings at the Hotel de Ville.† It is stated that M. Delescluze has, in consequence of a declaration on the part of his colleagues that the position was incompatible with his dignity, resigned the membership of the *Communal Committee* to which he was chosen at the election of Sunday.‡ The Communists still disagree among themselves as to their future movements. The monthly salary of the Communist Councilors is fixed at three hundred francs.§

MARCH 31. "The Government has completed arrangements for moving against Paris. Learning this, the Commune have resolved to march upon Versailles."

ANOTHER REIGN OF TERROR THREATENED.

STARTLING DECREES ISSUED BY THE COMMITTEE — EVERY ABLE-BODIED MAN MUST FIGHT — THE PAYMENT OF RENTS SUSPENDED — PROPOSED SALE OF THE GOVERNMENT PALACES — THE GUILLOTINE TO BE ESTABLISHED AGAIN.

Under the above caption: A decree was made public abolishing the conscription, stating that no force except the National Guards will be introduced into Paris, and ordering that all able-bodied male citizens shall belong to the National Guard. Another decree remits lodgers' rents from October, 1870, to April, 1871, and says the rents to be paid shall be reckoned by months. The sale of all pawned articles is suspended. || Another decree

* No such committee. "Wilfred" perhaps means Ulric, the general, who was raising troops in the Provinces. On the strength of this, to-day's reports in *The Tribune* are headed: "*Arbitrary measures of the Central Committee — Its opponents to be shot — One already condemned to death.*"

† Why should "the President" be in hiding? Blanqui, who was not in Paris.

‡ He resigned his seat in the Versailles Assembly.

§ Not quite seventeen dollars a week. Tell it not in Washington. These men were "pillagers."

|| The preamble of these decrees: "Considering that labor, industry, and commerce have borne all the charges of the war, that it is just that property should bear its share of sacrifices for the country," &c.

orders all public officials, on pain of dismissal, to disregard orders from Versailles.* Versailles documents are forbidden circulation. Paris grows sadder daily. One hundred and sixty thousand people have left the city in the last ten days. Chaplains are ordered to cease the performance of mass in the prisons. The insurance offices are searched for jewels and money of the Empress. The *Communal Council* holds its deliberations in private, but the following information has been divulged: An Executive Committee of seven members has been appointed; the Commune is divided into nine sections, — Finance, War, Justice, Safety, Subsistence, Education, Labor, Foreign, and Municipal.† The *Communal Council* is deliberating upon a proposal to pay the Prussian indemnity by the sale of Versailles, St. Cloud, and Fontainebleau. The evening edition of "The Times" (London) contains a letter saying that "measures of proscription were secretly enforced everywhere, and the significant word 'guillotine,' though spoken only in whispers, is in everybody's mouth."‡

After this date it is war.

APRIL 2. A movement is in progress to disarm and disband all battalions of Nationals which do not recognize the authority of the Commune.§ The National Guards as a body recognize the Commune. The party of order still hold possession of the Bank of France, which, however, "to save itself from being plundered," has advanced six million francs to the insurgents.

* Not unnecessary, when the Postmaster-General had gone off to Versailles, and when the officials, under Versailles orders, had already disorganized the service of the octroi, the registration, public assistance, and marine, and had threatened to stop the gas. The reorganization by the Commune seems to have been good, economical and effective.

† The Paris journals give the organization of the Communal Council as follows: *Executive, War, Justice, General Surety, Subsistence, Labor* (Industry and Exchange), *External Relations, Public Services, Education.*

‡ Which reported letter is the only warrant for The Tribune editor's malicious caption, — "ANOTHER REIGN OF TERROR THREATENED — THE GUILLOTINE TO BE ESTABLISHED AGAIN."

§ On the contrary, the Paris journals complain of the insufficient arming of the National Guards, and the Communal Council appeals to the patriotism of citizens to supply the want by bringing their spare muskets for the use of those who have none.

APRIL 6. A proclamation announces retaliatory measures.

APRIL 7. Fearful slaughter on both sides, yesterday and to-day. Terror reigns. *The prisons are crowded. The churches and houses of the aristocrats are pillaged, and all priests imprisoned.* A great many murders have taken place.*

APRIL 11. New efforts for conciliation are making in Paris, eighteen members of the Commune having declared themselves disposed to treat with the Versailles Government. The Commune hourly grows more desperate, and resorts to fierce excesses.

"The conciergerie is filled with priests and nuns who have been arrested on warrants calling them 'citizens styled the servants of a person called God.' Archbishop Darboy was stripped naked, bound to a pillar, and scourged and mocked for hours by a band of two hundred Reds."†

APRIL 11, MIDNIGHT. The insurgents *are said* to have made a demand upon the Church for one million francs, *and avow* that they will kill the Archbishop if it is not paid.‡

* Turning to the Paris journals, for *and against* the Commune, of these first days of April, when "terror reigned," &c., I find: Only one murder has been committed in Paris during two months. Palm Sunday. (April 2) celebrated in "all the churches" of Paris. "An inhabitant of the quarter" tells in one of the journals of the "déménagement à la Prussienne," by two hundred National Guards, of the house of the Prince de Wagram. I find no more outrages of these "Communists" *in Paris*; but outside they tell of eight Nationals taken prisoners by the Versaillists, who tie one to a horse's tail, and rip up (éventrer) another. And a girl's school, coming out of the church of Neuilly, is cut to pieces, *hashed*, by the Thiers grape-shot ("litteralement *hachée* par la mitraille").

Instead of "the churches are pillaged, and all priests imprisoned," read this: The Communal Council decrees the separation of Church and State, for Paris; suppresses the State allowance (budget des cultes); and declares the "biens dit de mortmain" and other church effects to be national property, *appointing an inquest concerning the same.*

† No doubt the same two hundred Reds who "prussianised" the house of the Prince de Wagram a week ago. The story is worthy of the known inventive powers of the historian Thiers, good for rousing the Breton and Vendean peasantry, but not believed even by a Tribune editor.

‡ One million francs, having already pillaged and taken all they could lay their hands on; and the priests, too, all in prison! An outrageous demand! These be "desperate" and "fierce excesses," in good sooth. And at midnight!

APRIL 12. The curé of the Church of Madeleine *is reported* to have been assassinated by a Parisian mob.

APRIL 13. The delegates proposing conciliation return. M. Thiers issues another circular calling them Communists and assassins. Resignations from the Commune continue.

APRIL 14. *The Communists** are plundering the public offices of their papers and their plate.† The latter is sent to the mint. The churches are carefully searched,‡ and all valuables seized to be converted into coin. Notwithstanding all *Communist* precautions, five hundred thousand people have left since the troubles began.§

APRIL 16. The state carriages of Prince Murat and Marshal Canrobert have been seized by the Commune officials. A delegate of the Commune has taken an inventory of the objects of value *in the most fashionable churches*.|| The Central Committee are still at variance with the Commune.¶

APRIL 20. A Commune manifesto says, *Paris does not aim at dictatorship. She desires the decentralized unity of the country.* "The London Telegraph" says, The Arc de Triomphe has been destroyed by the fire of the Versaillists. The "Mot d'Ordre" condemns the Commune for its suppression of various journals.

APRIL 21. Another revolution is imminent. The Commune has arrested the Central Committee. Complete anarchy reigns.

APRIL 23. Last evening the cash-box of the Parisian Gas

* Notice how adroitly the ingenuous editor changes the *Communal Council* to *the Communists*. "For ways that are dark," &c.

† Their "plate." What plate in public offices?

‡ To be sure that nothing was left by the first pillagers.

§ The troubles began on the 18th of March, twenty-five days ago. An exodus of twenty thousand persons daily, *notwithstanding Communist precautions*. It was one hundred and sixty thousand in ten weeks, before. It is well to certify the exactness of our correspondents.

|| The churches are pillaged on the 7th. On the 14th they carefully search them, and seize the remaining valuables. On the 16th they make an inventory of what is left. These *are* pillagers. And beside the treble pillage of the churches, having, let us say, gutted one house, they do seize two state carriages. A most Communistic and pillaging Communal Council, forsooth!

¶ Or Communal Council? The editor keeps the words well mixed, for the more confusion.

Company was opened by National Guards, and seven thousand francs abstracted. The money has been returned to the Gas Company. The Montmartre battalions are mutinous. A delegation of Freemasons has gone to Versailles to ask an armistice, to allow the inhabitants of the bombarded villages to leave.

APRIL 24. Thiers refuses the armistice. The Commune apologizes to the Gas Company. The churches of St. Roch and St. Sulpice have been reopened, and their curés released from imprisonment.

APRIL 25. Gen. Cluseret and the Central Committee are quarreling. Thiers admitted to the Freemasons his intention to bombard Paris as soon as he had all the forts. He consents to an armistice without recognizing the Commune. A placard on the walls of Paris invites "friends of order" to be in readiness to avenge their brethren murdered in the recent butchery in the Place Vendome.*

APRIL 30. A Masonic procession, half a mile in length, passed through the streets to-day, and planted their banners on the ramparts under a heavy fire. *All the Paris lodges were represented.* At a sitting of the Commune, M. Grousset repelled the charge of reproachable warfare. *The use of explosive bullets and the bombarding of women and children was confined to the Versaillists.* In the cartridge-boxes of prisoners explosive bullets had been found, and the wanton shelling of the most crowded parts of the city had been going on for weeks.

MAY 2. The Commune has appointed a Committee of Public Safety.

MAY 3. The Column in the Place Vendome and all statues and vestiges of monarchy are to be destroyed.†

* See the first note on page eighty-five.

† "The Commune of Paris —

"Considering that the imperial column on the Place Vendome is a monument of barbarism, a symbol of brute force and false glory, an affirmation of militaryism, a denial of international right, a permanent insult from the conquerors to the conquered, a perpetual criminal attempt [attentat] against one of the three great principles of the French Republic, Fraternity —

"Decrees, —

"*One single Article*: The Column of the Place Vendome shall be demolished.

"PARIS, April 12, 1871."

MAY 7. Five priests arrested on the charge of being spies. The church of St. Eustache converted into a political club-room; that of "St. German l'Auverrois" used for public meetings and concerts; and the Tuileries as an asylum for the widows and orphans of National Guards killed in the struggle. A decree orders the restoration of pledges under the value of five francs.

MAY 8. A concert at the Tuileries in aid of the wounded: twelve thousand francs collected.

MAY 10. The "Sub-committee of Organization," in a proclamation issued to-day, orders the troops not to cease firing on the *Versaillists who may attempt to surrender*; while fugitives and stragglers are to be sabred when caught, or, if in numerous bodies, fired into mercilessly with cannon and mitrailleuses.*

MAY 11. The demolition decreed of the house of M. Thiers, in consequence of his proclamation.

MAY 16. The Vendome Column thrown down.

MAY 19. A "*Court of Impeachment*" opened to-day to select hostages on whom to retaliate. *Many eminent citizens daily imprisoned.*† The sacred articles in the Church of the Trinity seized. All the churches to be similarly dealt with,‡ and then closed. The demolition of the Chapel of the Expiation§ begun.

MAY 24. Paris in flames. The Louvre completely gutted. Fires raging in nearly every street. The Versaillists fiercely bombarding. The dead unburied. The wounded lying untended in the streets.

MAY 25. Archbishop Darboy, ten hostages, and nearly fifty priests, murdered in cold blood at the Mazas Prison on Tuesday night.¶ The fires are nearly all extinguished. It is believed that in many cases they were caused by the shells of the Ver-

* I have not found elsewhere any mention either of the Committee or the proclamation.

† These eminent citizens not having escaped among the five hundred thousand who fled from Paris.

‡ What! pillaging them yet again?

§ Erected in memory of the martyred Louis XVI. Not yet demolished.

¶ This is the first account given. Probably the exact number will never be known, nor by whose order they perished. The "cold blood" is remarkable.

saillists, and not by the Communists. Last night and to-day the Government troops refused to give quarter, and killed all who fell into their hands. THE INSURGENTS *are dealing destruction and death*. THE VERSAILLISTS "are not savage, but exhibit a childish delight."

MAY 28. It is calculated that there are upward of fifty thousand dead bodies in the houses and cellars of Paris, many of women and children. Since Sunday* thirty thousand prisoners have been taken, "including numbers of debauched and foul-mouthed women."

So far I have taken the story of the Paris Commune from an enemy's pen. I have suppressed nothing, softened nothing, extenuated nothing, excused nothing, explained only where the explanation was beyond doubt, contradicted only with fair authority. Such tales as eating a chasseur's horse and scourging the naked Archbishop may be left with the "deaths" of men still alive, — uncommented upon. Other statements I leave unnoticed, not recognizing their truth, but being without present means for refuting or verifying them: often finding no mention of them save in the correspondence of "The Tribune." Let the story, with the exceptions noted, stand in "The Tribune" words, with some amount of mendacity still unaccounted for. Even so the accuser can find no warrant for "The Tribune's" foul-mouthed editorials. Where is the ground for the slanders of MM. Thiers and Favre, and all that pack of unprincipled "journalists" which has followed yelping at their heels? Two hundred thousand National Guards are neither pillagers nor assassins. The leaders of these "pillagers" gave themselves *less than seventeen dollars a week* as governors of Paris, and left exact accounts of all the monies which they *pillaged*. Save that one massacre (if you will) of "the hostages," an act of desperation which is not brought home to the Communal Council (and how many were not harmed? we are told that "the prisons were crowded"), no deed of blood disgraced the Parisians. In this "City of Assassins," during two months, up to the 4th of April, only one murder was committed in Paris,

* The report is dated Sunday ("May 28").

that for the sake of theft, *by one of Thiers' Breton Mobiles*. Under this "Reign of Terror," to the same date, until Paris was actually besieged, while M. Thiers was writing to the Prefects that "the Commune is pillaging," "held in horror by the Parisians, who wait impatiently for the moment of their deliverance," people went to and fro, in and out of the city, and appeals were made to citizens not to keep more than one musket while their fellow-citizens were unarmed. Where was the assassination? The slain and condemned men are yet alive. And the pillage is — THE LIE OF THE HISTORICAL LIAR, THIERS, re-uttered by a knavish fool in "The Tribune," who tells us that they inventoried the church valuables after the churches had been stripped, and refutes his own calumnies by inadvertently holding up the Communal Council of Paris as an example to New York.* Pillage! They did not even pillage the house of M. Thiers. They destroyed the Vendome Column, — not without giving reasons. Thiers did not spare the Arc de Triomphe. They fired public buildings, — by the right of war. "It is believed," says "The Tribune," "that in many cases the fires were caused by the shells of the Versaillists, and not by the Communists." By "the Communists," — it was the right of war. Were stone and mortar to be held more sacred than the lives of women and of children? If they fought with the fury of desperation, they were not brutal and cruel as their assailants were. On Thiers' head be the infamy — Napoleon out-Napoleoned — of raising an ignorantly fanatical army † to

* The Paris Commune was one of the worst bodies that ever cursed a nation or a city. But before its inglorious term of power closed it explained in detail how it acquired five million dollars, and how it expended that sum during two months of its government. Our rulers for two years have not accounted for the money they received, nor explained how it was disbursed. — *Tribune Editor*, May 29.

† The returned Papal Zouaves, Cathelineau's Vendéans, Charrette's Chouans, Trochu's Bretons: the scum of all the ignorance and bigotry of the rural districts. The character of these levies may be inferred from one single fact: that *the Italian Government* remonstrated, seeing in the very existence of such a force a threat of new intermeddling with Rome. To these were joined the Imperial Guards, the picked tools of Napoleon. So was constituted the Army of the Party of Order, under the Imperialist General, MacMahon.

repeat in the name of "order" the outrages and excesses of the League. No such unpatriotic disgrace can slur the sorrowful epitaph of the Paris Commune.

Were they Communists? A Communist has the right to put his belief into action. Was the International Association at its head or at its back? It matters little. The old Communist theories, though still perhaps held by a few individuals, have never moved the masses; are not, since 1849, the dominant theories of even a sect in France. The International Association I cannot track either as instigator or abettor. Members of that wide-spread Association (whose worst reproach is its peacefulness) were among them. It could not be otherwise when the Communal party embraced not merely a knot of political enthusiasts, but the whole working population of Paris, including also the smaller shopkeepers, — the whole of that class which lives by its own labor instead of by the exploitation of the labor of others. It was not only a revolt of Paris against an usurping Assembly: *it was a revolt of labor against the age-long unscrupulous rapacity of power.* For this, well understood by the party of Thiers and "order," it was so ruthlessly crushed out — if the massacre of only fifty thousand men, women, and children has crushed it out. Here is but the beginning.

HOW THE COMMUNAL MOVEMENT BEGAN, AND WHAT IT SOUGHT.

It dates from Napoleon's capitulation at Sedan: when men thought they saw in the establishment of the Commune the only force which could resist the Prussians. Favre, Trochu, and others were proclaiming the impossibility of defense; the defeated generals, to lessen their own shame, echoing the cry. Less cowardly, the Parisians, with yet some faith in the love of country, demanded the continuance of the war. The Committee of Defense, aware of the feeling against them, attempted, as governments always do, to hinder the expression of public opinion. This burst out, however, on the 20th of September, in a manifesto, then first published, which demanded, —

1. The suppression of the imperial police, or rather its transfer into the hands of the municipality.

2. Equal subsistence accorded to all citizens and their fami-

lies during the siege, and after the siege the abolition of misery by some social organization of production.

3. The levy *en masse* of all citizens, and forced requisition of whatever could be useful to the defense.

4. Suppression, after the war, of standing armies, and organization of the national militia.

5. The absolute sovereignty of the Commune in all regarding its taxation, police, education, and legislation.

This programme, identical with that proclaimed at the Hotel de Ville on March 18, could not suit the representatives of the principle of authority. It was discussed and combated by them; but, as it gained popularity, they precipitated events, so that on the 31st of October an attempted Communal manifestation was put down by the troops of the line and by the peasant mobiles brought by Trochu to defend the altar and the throne. Nevertheless, this manifestation proved the people's desire to defend themselves; and from this day the Government was forced to allow them to arm, refused before on the ground that there were not arms enough. Paris from that time became an immense war-factory: cannon were cast, cartridges made, old muskets altered. At the moment of capitulation Paris was in its best condition for defense. But the Government feared the Prussians less than they feared the armed people.

The capitulation filled Paris with consternation. And when it was learned that the Prussians would make a triumphal entry, the indignant feeling was so general that resistance, even in spite of the Government, was meditated. Two-thirds of the National Guard were of this mind, and Favre had to return to Bismarck to beg a modification of his programme. So some sort of compromise was come to.

During this parley between the National Guards and the Government, the Guards had taken charge of certain cannon which, though not included in the terms of surrender, the Government had carefully left in the way of the Prussians, as if willing to be rid of them. These the National Guards removed to Montmartre, and placed under the watch of all their battalions, turn by turn.

Meanwhile, the first act of the newly elected Assembly, met

at Bordeaux, was to affront Paris by refusing to hear either Garibaldi* or Victor Hugo. Resenting this, convinced that the Assembly was royalist, and seeing themselves overruled by the rural districts, again the Commune came into men's minds as the fittest remedy. Still it was only an idea. What further provocation was needed was supplied by the decision to hold the Assembly out of Paris, and by the violent intentions of Thiers, — so plainly put forth in his speeches and proclamations, and attempted to be carried out by the night surprise on the 17-18th of March, and the invasion of Paris on the 18th by the Government troops. In face of this bad faith and maladroitness, the men who had taken the initiative against the capitulation reappeared as a Committee of the National Guard,† and appealed to the city to organize their municipal government, — the Paris Commune.

The situation will be sufficiently explained by the following extracts from the Paris Communal journals. "La Commune," No. 2, March 21, says, —

Paris is reproached with sending ready-made governments to the peasants, — and it is the peasants who weigh down Paris with their empire, plebiscitums, and deputies, who may perfectly satisfy their sottishness, but who have on us the effect of an exhumation of another age. We have been long enough at their mercy. They have absolved December the 2d condemned by us, voted for the war which we repulsed, abandoned the country we would have defended, and now they would impose on us a king.

"Le Cri du Peuple," March 25, says, —

The programme of the revolution has been produced: Paris a free city, not separated from France, but not submitted to statesmen whom it pleases the Province to acclaim, to elect, or to suffer; Paris freely governing itself through its Communal Council and civic and corporate organization, voting its own budget, sending its deputies to the National Assembly, — legislative or federal, — contributing its share for the charges of the country, furnishing in case of war a certain contingent of mobile national guards; Paris remaining the industrial, commercial, economic, and intellectual capital, while ceas-

* He was elected for seven places.

† They were men unknown to politics, obscure men, — their enemies say, — a reproach or a compliment; and their influence appears due only to the popularity of their cause, and the fact of their initiative in the matter of opposing the capitulation. Some days later I find them sustained by a delegation from all the arrondissements of Paris.

ing to be the political capital of France. . . . At once renovative and conservative, in accord with the traditions of France.

Such programmes of course bind no men. In all revolutions and parties there are some who think the programme too far-going, while in the minds of others it goes not far enough. Among the elder politicians, like Blanqui, some dreams of the old Communist utopias might yet linger. But Communism — the having all things in common, abolition of property and family — nowhere appears, either in the words or acts, of *Communal* (not *Communistic*) Paris. Here I speak neither for nor against theories: I am only stating facts. The Communal idea of this last revolution, so far from being a carrying-out of the ideas of the revolutionists of '89 and '48 (Communistic or other), was indeed a retrogression, — an absolute going back to the days before "France" was.

Look into Thierry's "Letters on the History of France." Read there the account of the Communes, in ancient Gaul, yet divided among kings and counts ever warring upon one another, a country without nationality, without unity, without government. Not rising, as in England, by grace of royal charter, but retaining, with certain modifications, the Roman franchises, only availing themselves of royal pretense or alliance against too potent lord or bishop, these municipalities realized all the freedom possible in those days, were indeed cities of refuge for republican thought, fastnesses in which the worker and the trader found some safety from crowned and helmeted ruffianism that strode high-handed over the world.

The enthusiasm of old times communicated itself from place to place, producing revolutions wherever it found a population numerous enough to dare to enter into the struggle with feudal power. The inhabitants of the towns which this political movement had gained met together in the church or market-place, and took oath, upon the holy things, to sustain one another, and thenceforth not to permit that any one of them should be wronged or treated as a serf. It was this oath, this *conjuración* (or swearing together) as it was called in ancient documents, which gave birth to the Commune. All those who were bound together in this manner took thence the name of *sworn men*, or *men in Communion* ("*jurés*" or "*Communiers*"), and for them these new titles comprehended the ideas of duty, fidelity, and reciprocal devotedness, expressed in antiquity by the word "citizen." . . .

In the south of Gaul, where the old Roman cities existed in greater number, and where, farther off from the centre of Germanic invasions and domination, they had kept their population and their riches, the attempts at enfranchisement were, if not more energetic, at least more completely fortunate. It is there only that the enfranchised cities reached the plenitude of that republican existence which was in some sort the ideal to which all the Communes aspired.*

To this succeeded the establishment of one kingly power, bringing in the principle of centralization, necessary perhaps towards the unity of the nation, but crushing out the republican Communes. The democratic spirit which arose afterwards in opposition to the centralization of royalty was only reactionary, the assertion of anarchical individualism, not republican. Monarchy overthrown, at the close of the eighteenth century, democracy had logically but the choice between free-trade or Communism, — the two egotisms of employer and employed, in either case only the assertion of every individual's right of power, the opposite pole of the individualism of monarchy. '48 and '51 showed us how extremes meet; how, "the Republic" failing through aiming at egotistical *interests* only, the Empire could outbid the Republic in its appeal to the mere rights of the democracy. Empire is but the greediness of one man; and if democracy be only the assemblage of so many greeds, why should they not come to terms? So universal suffrage proclaimed the Emperor. And the republican must take a new departure. If he accept not the higher theory of *duty*, if his Republic be not *the work of all for the good of all*, growing out of an active and even self-sacrificing propagandism for the sake of all humanity, on what ground shall he build? He confines himself to a mere politic "republicanism," which is only self-defense. After the defeat of '51, who shall wonder that men, whose belief had been in schemes only for the material advantage of individuals (only that, however generous and self-sacrificing the advocate), should stand at bay instead of beginning a new pursuit? Who shall blame them if they could not escape the fatality of their own logic? Men who had passed through the Communism of Cabet and the like may be pardoned if, even

* Thierry, Letter xiii.

in rejecting that, they still retained some little of the separatist spirit of earlier days, confirmed also, it may be, by a natural feeling of reaction against the centralization which has been the curse of modern France, and which helped to throw her so entirely at the feet of the Decembrist. On the other hand, men feeling the insufficiency of merely political change caught perhaps too hastily at any clue to lead them from the labyrinth. I am not criticising the men. I am only recalling certain modes of thought, so endeavoring to find the causes and track the courses of events.

In their exile, after the establishment of the Empire, Pyat and some others appear to have fallen back upon this idea of the older Commune. Recollect the vote, not once only, for the Emperor. Bear in mind the net-work of imperial centralization. What shall break through that? What shall stand against the mightily organized power of the Church, buttressing the Empire? Appeal to the nation, — to the voices of the ignorant peasant majority! Wait the triumph of ideas, — ideas are proscribed, and it is the Church that educates. Exile or the City of Refuge — there seems no other choice. Again the Empire passes, not overthrown, but falling through. There is again a chance. Even this despair shall give us ground. This war against the foreigner shall make a nation of us, and in some sort a republic, with room and time for development and the thought of further progress. And, lo! the peasantry elects a monarchical Assembly that betrays us to the Prussians; the army of the Church will bind us to the wheels of some new constitutional monarchy, — a new Louis Philippe, or Thiers, in place of Napoleon. As a Frenchman, I think I would have given my life unhesitatingly for the Commune. And yet —

Outside of all individual or national difficulties, beyond all that may excuse or justify us as individuals or in the composite individuality of nationhood, stands the inexorable law of cause and effect, which will not spare us for any excuse, for even the most sufficient justification. The days of isolation and separatism are at an end, whether in Convents, Communes, or Communities, whether for Cities of Refuge or for Nations. The walls of China are falling, as those of Arles and Nimes and

Laon fell, not to be built up again. Our business, our hope, is no longer isolation, but association and devotion to humanity. The Christian theory of *Right* is a problem worked out and demonstrated. We have no new phase of it to learn. But we have to learn the new gospel of *Communion*, the *Duty* of fellowship. Not again the hermitage in which the world may be forgotten; not again the Commune of old time, jealously guarding itself from the world, an armed sentinel, as inhumanly if not as tyrannously egotistical as the robber lord or more imperial brigand against whom it then was justified in keeping guard; no longer the narrow national and inhuman policy of "avoiding entangling alliances." The hermit must quit his cell for active citizenship, the Commune labor *for and with and under order of* the nation, the nation own itself a citizen of the world. Each in its sphere, — citizen, Commune, or nation, — only the sworn soldier, or, if need be, martyr, of universal republicanism. This is the duty of the time: and in the misunderstanding of this lay the mistake of the Paris Commune, and the weakness which would have insured its failure, though the Red flag were floating now over the Hotel de Ville, not only in Paris, but in all the Communes of "republican" France.

Again, I am not speaking against the men. Before the men who gave their lives so grandly I bow my head with reverence I would not owe to kings. I would rather be with Delescluse in that bloody Paris gutter than with the Kaiser in his triumphal car. Honor to the defeated Commune! But let even the other cities of France remonstrate with Paris. Why did they not second her endeavor? Not altogether because of the lying circulars of Thiers; not certainly for want of some sympathetic spontaneity. Lyons and Marseilles believed also in the Commune. Toulouse obeyed the impulse of the capital. But why should one Commune move *with* another? A federation of Communes may be a philosopher's dream; but the policy is unsound. If your principle is isolation, separation, the federation is as it pleases us, when it pleases us, or not at all. There lies the fatal error of any sectional policy. We are not going backward to secession and division, even with a federation as the end. The peoples have suffered enough to obtain even the

framework of nationality: suffered all the evils of kingship, obliged, for the sake of one great ruler in an age, to bear the tricks of ordinary monarchs who cut and carved the countries at their caprice, joining this to that without sense of fitness, and often in their wars sundering the little cohesion that wiser men ordained or better times allowed. Still, after much suffering, we are somehow stumbling into the framework of nationality, the first condition for the real organization of society. It is something to have the form. Though the spirit of nationality which shall give us life and growth can only be breathed into us by the Republic.

The Commune is a failure. The men who attempted it are condemned. The great humanitarian question set by these "Communists," the question of the abolition of misery through the organization of labor, is not to be solved that way. Is the Reaction therefore sure? This wager of battle has given no verdict for or against the issue. It says no more than this: Not by a single city, nor by a separate nation, shall that remodeling of society be accomplished through which the hire of the laborer shall no longer be kept back by fraud. The weakness of the Paris Commune lay in its isolation. Yet all that blood has not been poured out in vain. One gain cannot escape us. While we note mistaken policy, let us not the less take this to heart: that once again these men of Paris have given to the world the ever-needed example of heroic daring and devotedness, have laid one more broad stone (though it be their own grave-stone) of that glorious causeway over which Humanity, defeated or triumphant, marches firmly to the Republic.

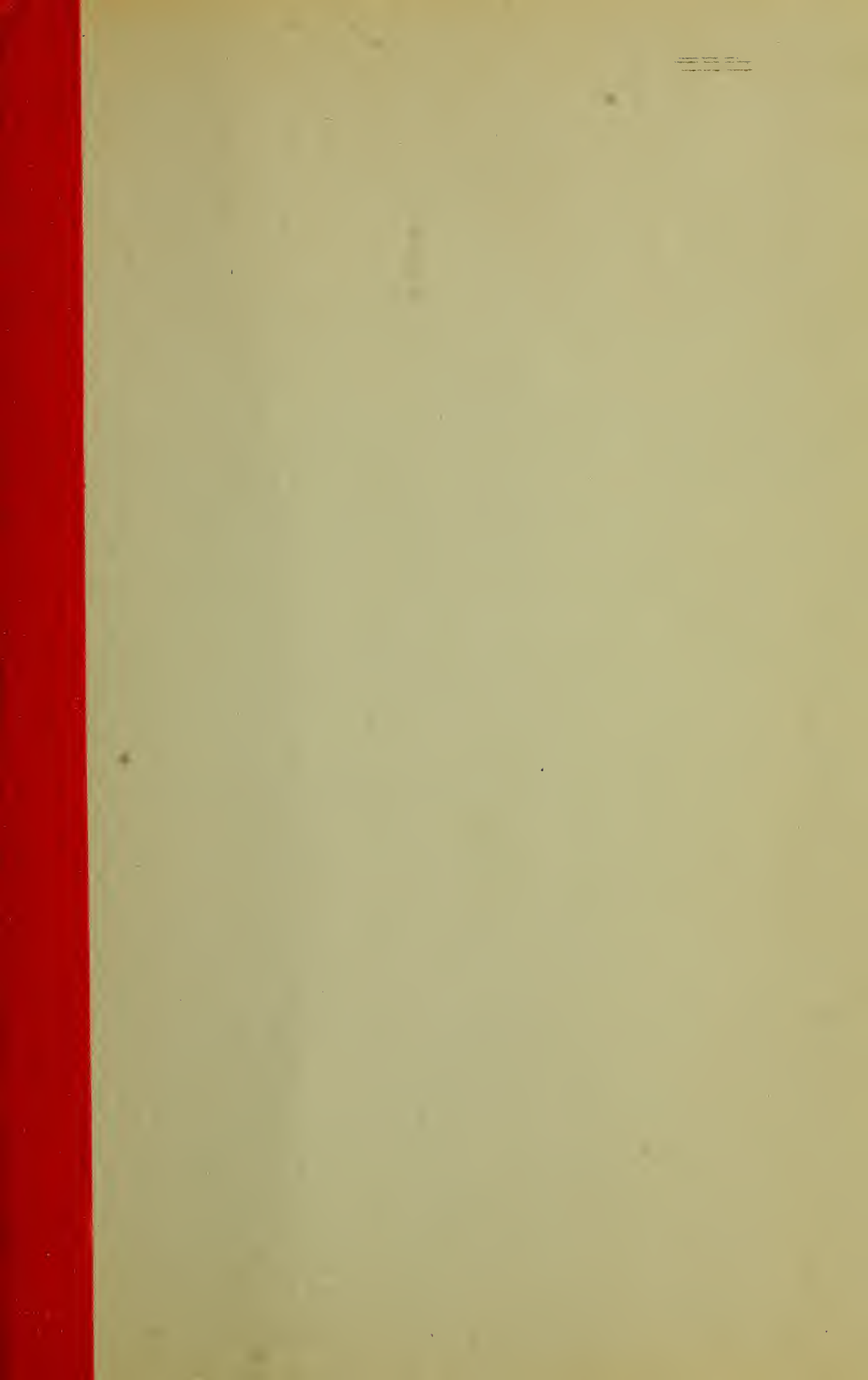
THE RADICAL MONTHLY.

THE RADICAL is a medium for the expression of earnest and fearless opinions on all subjects that affect the religious, social and political character of the present time. It caters to no popular sentiment, but in the face of whatever opposition seeks to state the truth, and to urge important measures of reform. It takes side with principles and rational measures, instead of deferring to the authority of persons, or the tyranny of custom and time-honored tradition. Whatever the past has delivered to us, which in the light of to-day appears to be wise and good, it honors with a true respect; but to organized ignorance, bigotry and superstition, to the usurpations of State and Church, to political and ecclesiastical despotisms,—Protestant as well as Catholic,—that have drifted to our time, it presents an undisguised and determined protest, denouncing them without fear or apology. Building upon the foundation of truth and justice, as revealed in the noblest thought and aspiration of the race, it heartily rejoices in its work, and solicits the hearty co-operation of all people who are in earnest for the diffusion of humane and rational views of life. Never was there any time freighted with a greater number of unsettled questions whose discussion has become a paramount duty, than the present. And the discussion has passed from the few to the many. All men and women are now summoned to the task of *forming an opinion*. Convictions, the result of inquiry and rational thought, are henceforth to be the universal passport to honor and respectability. Emancipation is to be carried into the domain of the intellect, and no one is there bound to be a slave.

To this end THE RADICAL claims to exist. Let all who favor its purpose rally to its support. Single Subscription, one year, \$3.00; Single Copy, 30 cts.

Address THE RADICAL, BOSTON, MASS.

206



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 019 648 964 2